



# About The Friant Division

## THE LAND, ITS CROPS AND ITS PEOPLE

- **The Central Valley Project's Friant Division service area** includes one million acres of the world's richest farmland in portions of Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kings counties which annually produces about \$2.5 billion in gross agricultural production with a tremendous variety of crops and that amount turns over and expands as it passes through the economy. Numerous communities depend on Friant water supplies either directly — such as the cities and towns of Fresno, Friant, Orange Cove, Lindsay, Strathmore and Terra Bella — or indirectly from groundwater recharge from irrigation.
- **The 15,000 mostly small Friant Division family farmers** have, largely thanks to the availability of Friant project water, accomplished what was asked of them by the federal government when the CVP was being developed. They have created the most productive agricultural region in the world.
- **All water diverted** into the Friant service area has been beneficially used for irrigation and municipal purposes.

## PRINCIPAL PROJECT FEATURES

- **Friant Dam and Millerton Lake** on the San Joaquin River northeast of Fresno.
- **The 152-mile Friant-Kern Canal** from Friant to the Kern River in Bakersfield.
- **The 36-mile Madera Canal** that runs northwest to Ash Slough, east of Chowchilla.

## FRIANT DIVISION CONTRACTORS AND AGENCIES

- **Twenty-eight districts and cities**, all along the southern San Joaquin Valley's East Side, have CVP-Friant water service contracts with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.
- **Eight agencies** (six districts, two counties) have Cross-Valley Canal exchange contracts.
- **The Friant Water Users Authority** represents 22 of these agencies. The FWUA was formed in 1985 under the state's joint exercise of powers law to operate and maintain the Friant-Kern Canal.
- **The new Friant Water Authority**, which has 20 member agencies, assumed operation and maintenance of the Friant-Kern Canal June 30, 2004.

- **The Madera-Chowchilla Water and Power Authority** operates and maintains the Madera Canal.
- **The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**, an agency of the Interior Department, operates and maintains Friant Dam and administers the Central Valley Project, including determining the Friant Division's water supply availability.

## **FRIANT WATER DELIVERIES AND RELEASES**

- **On average, the Friant Division annually** delivers approximately 1.3 million acre-feet of water. Some parts of the service area rely totally on Friant Division water as their sole source of supply. Other parts of the region are blessed with good quality aquifers allowing for groundwater recharge during wet years which can be then drawn upon during dry years (what is known as the *conjunctive use* of surface water and groundwater sources). The Friant Division is unique among Bureau of Reclamation projects in it uses a two-class system of water delivery:
  - **Class 1** water is the “firm” supply, the first 800,000 acre-feet of project water to develop behind Friant Dam. It is delivered to parts of the service area that have limited or no access to groundwater supplies and as a base supply to other districts.
  - **Class 2** water develops only after it becomes evident to the Bureau of Reclamation that all Class 1 demands can be met (usually in average or above-average water years). It is delivered to districts that can rely on groundwater. Class 2 water is typically used to replenish the groundwater through “in-lieu” recharge, providing growers with surface water in-lieu of using their wells, and through direct recharge. Friant has 1.4 million acre-feet of Class 2 water under contract, although the amount of Class 2 water varies from that amount to none at all, depending on the water year's runoff; it averages 400,000 acre-feet. For certain limited times (usually when flood releases are being made), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation makes available full supplies of Class 2 water and occasionally provides water for use outside of normal Reclamation Law restrictions under Section 215 of the Reclamation Reform Act.
- **Friant Dam Riparian Flow Releases** to the San Joaquin River for 38 miles downstream from Friant Dam average more than 100,000 acre-feet of water supply each year.
- **Flood releases from Friant Dam** average more than 200,000 acre-feet each year as modeled over the last 80 years with actual flood releases exceeding an average of 400,000 acre-feet over the last 30 years. This water can't be put to use in the Friant Division due to limited storage and conveyance facilities. During the spring and summer of 2006, approximately 1.2 million acre-feet of water was lost to flood releases.

- **Groundwater is a crucial part** of the overall Friant Division supply. Much of the Friant Division relies upon a combination of groundwater and surface water to meet all crop needs. The Friant Division came into service between 1944-56 and has been successful in arresting the serious condition of groundwater overdraft that existed prior to the project although a critical groundwater overdraft still exists in parts of the service area and in other parts of the southern San Joaquin Valley.

## **WHERE FRIANT WATER COMES FROM**

- **Friant water users depend** upon the San Joaquin River and water rights obtained in the late 1930s by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, prior to Friant Dam's construction. One of these agreements requires delivery of 840,000 acre-feet of a substitute supply of CVP water each year to the West Side "Exchange Contractors", which hold historic rights to San Joaquin River water, through the Delta-Mendota Canal. That exchange makes diversions at Friant Dam possible.
- **Although Friant Dam** is frequently cited as the sole contributor to diminished San Joaquin River flows and resulting anadromous fishery losses, significant flows were diverted beginning in the 1860s and 1870s, long before Friant Dam was built (between 1939-44), at Mendota Dam and Sack Dam on the San Joaquin Valley's West Side. Records show that the river was often dried up downstream from the Sack Dam diversion. Construction of San Joaquin Light and Power's Kerchkoff Dam near Auberry in 1916 blocked upstream fish passage and high Sierra Nevada salmon spawning. Later, 10 additional upstream dams and diversion facilities were built, mostly before Friant Dam was completed.

## **FRIANT'S POLICY OF SEEKING SOLUTIONS**

Friant agencies are engaged in a number of other activities that have outstanding potential to benefit the San Joaquin River. They include:

- **The San Joaquin River Group Authority's** Vernalis Adaptive Management Program and river fish flows.
- **The San Joaquin River Water Quality Management Group** as it works on improvements to flow and water quality.
- **A Water Quality Exchange Program** being pursued with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California that addresses concerns regarding drinking water quality for more than 20 million Californians as well as potential positive water supply impacts to the Friant service area.
- **The CalFed Bay-Delta Program** and its many studies and activities related to the Bay-Delta Estuary.

- **The Upper San Joaquin Basin Storage Investigation** being conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources, including the proposed Temperance Flat Dam and Reservoir.
- **Development of restoration strategies** for the San Joaquin River, including a number of important studies and inventorying activities involving federal, state and stakeholder agencies and groups, that continued even after an earlier four-year settlement process with the NRDC coalition ended.
- **A commitment by Friant leaders** to address problems and issues by attempting to work constructively with others with differing views. As a result, Friant has forged excellent, productive working relationships agencies such as MWD and Westlands Water District with which Friant at one time had significant differences. The same policy made it possible for Friant to work closely with NRDC and its environmental plaintiffs for four years on possible San Joaquin River enhancement solutions and now has resulted in a settlement of the litigation, plus a commitment to work together to achieve the Restoration Goal, Water Management Goal and related activities and needs related to the San Joaquin River. Friant is a strong supporter of environmental values and San Joaquin River restoration. But Friant also takes pride in what has been created over the past half century along the valley's East Side thanks to a dependable water supply, and federal and state commitments made so long ago.

***Please See "Friant Division Facts," Next Page***

